

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 CU-02 SY-05 SCCT-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 NEAE-00 /073 W

----- 084991

P R 111214Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5989

INFO AMCONSUL ALEXANDRIA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMCNSUL PORT SAID

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, EG

SUBJECT: MAJOR FIRE AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF CAIRO

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. AHRAH REPORTED AUGUST 11 THAT FIRE BROKE OUT AT 0300 LOCAL IN NEW AUC LIBRARY UNDER CONSTRUCTION. FIRE SPREAD QUICKLY TO WOODEN SCAFFOLDS. PAPER SAID FIRST REPORT OF FIRE MADE BY POLICE CAR, WHICH NOTIFIED NEARBY TAHRIR SQUARE FIRE STATION. TWENTY FIRE TRUCKS ON SCENE AND FIREMEN HAD TO EXERT GREAT EFFORT TO PREVENT IT FROM SPREADING TO NEARBY BUILDINGS. THREE GUARDS IN CHARGE OF CONSTRUCTION SITE WERE ARRESTED. END UNCLASSIFIED.

2. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. IN ABSENCE PRESIDENT BYRD, WHO IS OUT OF COUNTRY, AMBASSADOR CALLED DEAN LAMONT TO EXPRESS HIS PERSONAL REGRETS AND TO DETERMINE FACTS IN CASE. LAMONT SAID FIRE HAD FIRST BEEN NOTICED AT 0220 LOCAL BY PERSON IN NEARBY AUC HOSTEL. FLAMES WERE ALREADY SIZEABLE. FIRE SPREAD VERY QUICKLY TO ALL FOUR CORNERS OF BUILDING WITHIN ONE HALF HOUR, DESPITE FACT THAT THERE WERE NO COMBUSTIBLES ON SITE, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A LOT OF WOOD. NONE OF FOUR  
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WATCHMEN WERE PRESENT. LAMONT ALSO PERPLEXED BY FACT

THAT FIRE DEPARTMENT APPARENTLY WAS NOT NOTIFIED UNTIL AUC OFFICIAL ARRIVED ON SCENE AFTER FIRE WELL UNDERWAY AND VISIBLE FOR CLOSEST FIRE STATION. LAMONT DOES NOT RULE OF POSSIBILITY OF SABOTAGE, ALTHOUGH POLICE OFFICER SPECULATED THAT WATCHMEN'S HABITUAL FIRE TO BREW TEA MAY HAVE BEEN CAUSE. LAMONT SAID POLICE HAVE ARRESTED THE FOUR WATCHMEN FOR INTERROGATION AND ARE CONDUCTING AN INVESTIGATION ON THE SITE. BUILDING, WHICH HAS BEEN UNDER CONSUTRCTION FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS, SUFFERED EXTENSIVE DAMAGE, AND DEAN LAMONT IS UNDERSTANDABLY SADDENED AND DISTURBED BY FACT THAT FIRE TOOK PLACE WHILE HE IN CHARGE. BUILDING WAS INSURED.

3. COMMENT: THIS IS VERY PRELIMINARY REPORT AND, DESPITE SUSPICIOUS ELEMENTS, WE ARE NOT PREPARED TO JUMP TO CONCLUSION THAT IT WAS ATTACK ON AMERICAN INSTALLATION. AMBASSADOR HAS ASKED LAMONT TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH AND ASSURED HIM OF EMBASSY'S DESIRE TO BE HELPFUL. WILL REPORT FURTHER.

EILTS

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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